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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Roberts DATE TYPED: 02/11/03 HB 426

SHORT TITLE: Soil and Water Conservation Districts SB _____

ANALYST: Williams

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	\$1,152.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE

Estimated Revenue		Subsequent Years Impact	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04			
	\$1,152.0		Recurring	Federal

(Parenthesis () Indicate Revenue Decreases)

Duplicates SB 385

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files
 Commission on Higher Education (CHE)
 New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 426 appropriates \$1,152.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents at New Mexico State University (NMSU) for the purpose of providing matching funds for water conservation and natural resource restoration technical assistance.

Significant Issues

The federal Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, the 2002 Farm Bill, authorizes significant increases in federal programs for soil and water conservation, protection of farmlands and wetlands, air and water quality improvement and wildlife habitat improvements. New Mexico funding for private landowners is projected at \$20 million for these conservation programs. Under the new approach, local soil and water conservation districts will assume additional administrative and technical assistance duties to implement the programs.

Funding appropriated in House Bill 426 would provide state match for 36 district field offices to hire additional employees to assist in administration of the new programs. Federal funding of \$1,152.0 would be obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. According to NMDA, these employees would maintain lists of technical service providers, track funding provided to farmers and ranchers, evaluate programs and prepare recommendations as well as develop grazing rotations and design wetlands.

CHE notes this funding request was not included in the NMSU budget request; the NMSU Board of Regents approved the project in December 2002.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1,152.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY 04 shall revert to the general fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

NMDA expects a significant increase in its workload.

AW/yr